



Memorandum

TO: Mayor and City Council

FROM: Bob Morgan, Interim City Manager

DATE: October 8, 2009

SUBJECT: Items for Your Information

IFYI HIGHLIGHTS

- Contact Center Feedback
- “Revealing” Signs on MLK, Jr. Dr.
- Maintenance Facilities @ Barber Park & Gateway Gardens
- Weatherization Assistance Program
- Neighborhood Small Projects Program
- Public Records’ Meetings
- US 29 Lighting
- Horse Pen Creek Rd. Project Planning Study
- Plastic Bottle Recycling

Contact Center Feedback

Attached is the weekly report generated by our Contact Center for the week of 9/28/09-10/04/09.
(Attachment 1)

Update on “Revealing” Signs on MLK, Jr. Drive

City staff has checked out the two exterior wall signs at the new sexually oriented business (SOB) night club called “LAX” on MLK, Jr. Drive, near Alamance Church Road. The signs are not in violation of any city sign regulation. The City is allowed to regulate the size, type and location of signs, but not the content. The Legal Department has referred the matter to the NC Attorney General’s Office to determine if the signs may be in violation of the state’s decency or obscenity laws. Staff will report any findings to the Council once they are received from the Attorney General’s Office.

Update on Maintenance Facilities at Barber Park and Gateway Gardens

The joint maintenance facility funding was included in the 2008 Bond for Phase 2 of the Barber Park Master Plan. Per Council’s request to accelerate bond projects, this project will move forward as a part of the overall construction and improvements for the Barber Park and Gateway Gardens facilities. Design work for the building has already been completed.

Weatherization Assistance Program Update

As a part of the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009, States have received a significant increase in funding for energy efficiency upgrades for low income homes. North Carolina has received \$113 million to be provided over the next three years, \$10 million of which should flow to the Triad area. Regional Consolidated Services (RCS) based in Asheboro is the non-profit agency that the State contracts with to run the weatherization program for the Triad. RCS expects to be able to weatherize more than 2,000 homes during the next three years. Right now RCS is preparing to implement this expanded program by buying additional equipment and hiring and training additional employees. Further information will be provided to the community in the coming weeks.

Changes in Neighborhood Small Project Program

The City will not take new applications this year for neighborhood grants due to the backlog of grants approved in prior years which have **not** been funded.

Public Records' Meetings

As part of the next steps towards creating a process for tracking public records requests, ACM Denise Turner will host a feedback session with members of the media and others. Some of the information gathered from the sessions will be incorporated in the process recommendations prior to bringing them back to Council for review. This is part of the next steps process delineated in the *IFYI* to Council June.

The City will also co-sponsor briefing sessions with the Sunshine Center Program from Elon University's School of Communications on October 22 at 2PM and 7PM at the Greensboro Historical Museum. The purpose of the sessions is to provide best practices in managing public records, review the state law and highlight recent legislative activity.

US 29 Lighting

NCDOT and the City of Greensboro are pursuing Federal Stimulus funds to upgrade the lights along US 29. Effective street lighting is important along US 29 given the roadway configuration and the safety needs of the corridor. However, lighting along US 29 between I-40 and McKnight Mill Road was installed in 1972 and is currently substandard, with obsolete wiring leading to frequent outages.

Additional Federal Stimulus funding is available to NCDOT because of cost savings from lower than expected prices for other Federal Stimulus projects in NC. Two recent and pending steps have been taken to pursue additional funding for this project:

- 1.) The MPO Transportation Advisory Committee amended the Metropolitan Transportation Improvement Program in September to include the US 29 lighting project; and
- 2.) NCDOT expects to add the project to the Statewide Transportation Improvement Program in November. Once the US 29 lighting upgrade project is added to the State Transportation Improvement Program, the State will submit the project for possible Federal Stimulus Funding.

If approved for Federal Stimulus funding, NCDOT will design and administer the project with completion by mid-2011. NCDOT will enter into a municipal agreement with the City regarding the project once a Federal go-ahead for the project is secured

The US 29 lighting project includes upgrading the entire lighting system from I-40 to McKnight Mill Road. Currently NCDOT owns and maintains the streetlights along US 29 from Phillips Avenue to McKnight Mill Road. Duke Energy owns and maintains the lights along US 29 from I-40 to Phillips Avenue through a contract with the City of Greensboro. Through a municipal agreement, NCDOT reimburses the City of Greensboro for a portion of the cost to operate and maintain the lights between I-40 and Phillips Avenue.

City staff will ask Council to consider an agreement with Duke Power to transfer the ownership of the current streetlights from I-40 to Phillips Avenue to the City of Greensboro at the October 20th City Council meeting. NCDOT will retain ownership of the lighting North of Phillips Avenue.

Update on Horse Pen Creek Road Project Planning Study

Attached is a memo from Chris Spencer, GDOT Congestion Management & ITS Engineer describing the status of the Horse Pen Creek Road Project Planning Study.

PSA on Plastic Bottle Recycling

At Council Member Wade's request, Channel 13 produced a 30-second Public Service Announcement (PSA) showing how to recycle plastic bottles and throw away the caps. The PSA is airing now.

ATTACHMENT 1
Public Affairs Department Contact Center Weekly Report
Week of 9/28/09-10/04/09

Contact Center

5049 calls answered this week

Top 5 calls by area

Water Resources

Balance Inquiry – 1382
New customer - 305
Request to cutoff - 114
High usage - 75
Constr. & Maint - 69

Field Operations

Recycle Guidelines - 132
Bulk guidelines - 63
Appliance pick up - 45
Dead animal pick up - 42
No service – green - 40

All others

Police/Watch Operations – 339
Warrants - 182
Landfill/Transfer/HHW – 77
Clerk of Courts - 64
Online payments - 39

Comments

We received a total of 8 comments this week:

- 4 comments for **Field Operations**

Caller wants to thank the crew for delivering the recycle bags so fast. She said she called for them yesterday morning and they were delivered by the afternoon.

Caller states residents are put in a bad spot with the new recycle law. The brown can is full every other week, and now we have to put more in it with new law. Thinks that a can purchase is not a good option, too expensive.

Anonymous resident called with recycling questions. During our conversation he remarked that he uses the transfer station frequently and suggested that it would be convenient to have a recycling dumpster there so residents did not have to go to two places.

Resident was calling in for the Solid Waste Dept; he said he had to hold too long and listen to a recording he did not want to hear. He said when you are calling a dept the call should go directly to the area.

- 1 comment for **Police**

Caller wanted to commend Police Officer Smith (badge #600) - caller was passing through GSO, was in a minor hit and run, this officer was so kind and courteous and professional. Caller was given information to mail a letter to the Chief of Police.

- 3 comments for **Water Resources**

Caller states that she should not be reaching a recording on the after hours line for water. She said she paid her bill plus the penalties, and should reach a person on that line. She needs to know the time we will come out to turn the service back on.

****9/30/2009 **** Note – the night recording gives two options at the very beginning regarding water services, both of which would connect her to a live person.

Caller upset that the water statement gives one date to pay and we have cut water off. Directed her to the paragraph in the middle of the statement that if there are past due funds, they must be paid to avoid a disconnect. She will not have funds until Friday, and is not happy with the statement showing a future due date and now she has no water for several days.

Customer wanted to thank us for still having a "human touch", and working with customers on water bills when they run into trouble paying. She felt that this was "huge".

Overall

Calls about the new recycling law affecting plastic bottles generated quite a few calls as residents, businesses and multi-tenant locations tried to determine how this change affected them. We worked closely with the commercial representatives in the solid waste division to get them information from callers who are interested in starting a recycling program at their business or housing complex. Many other callers were interested in our drop site locations, and were given that information for their use.

Call volumes were much closer to our normal levels, with only one day last week having less than one thousand calls. We did not quite make it to our one-millionth call last week, but will reach that number today (Monday).

MEMORANDUM

Date: October 1, 2009
To: Bob Morgan, Interim City Manager
From: Chris Spencer, Congestion Management & ITS Engineer
Subject: Update on Horse Pen Creek Road Project Planning Study

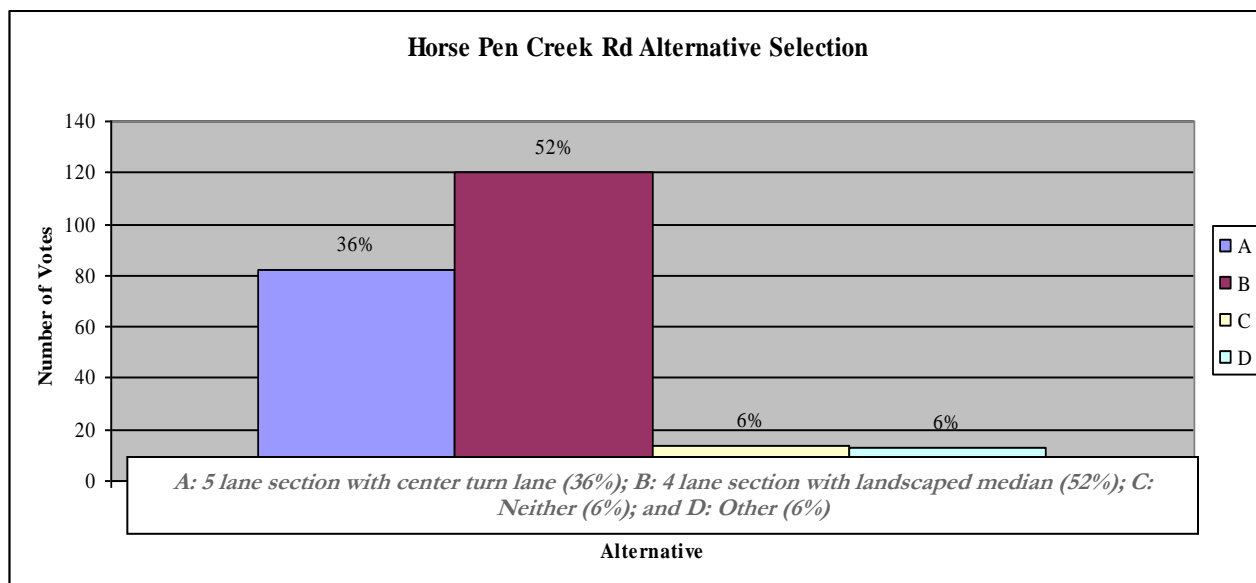
Background

Horse Pen Creek Road is a minor thoroughfare in northwest Greensboro that has seen significant traffic growth in recent years. Improvements are needed to provide drivers, pedestrians, and bicyclists with a safer and less congested facility. A project to improve Horse Pen Creek Road between Battleground Avenue and New Garden Road was identified as part of the November 2008 Transportation Bond Referendum that was approved by voters. Beginning in early 2009, GDOT staff began a feasibility study to gather feedback from stakeholders to determine the appropriate improvements for the facility.

Public Process

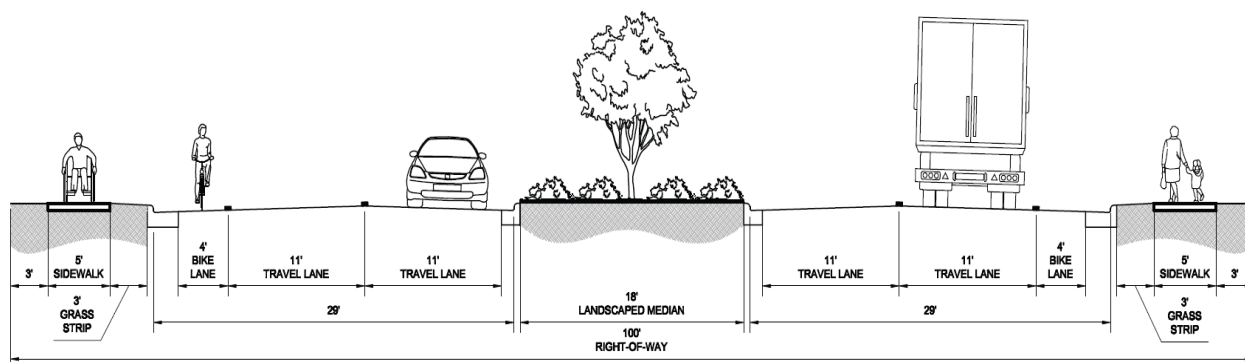
The first public workshop was conducted on April 30th and was very well received with more than 300 meeting attendees. At this meeting, we solicited feedback from the public on two distinct options for improvements to Horse Pen Creek Road. Alternative A was a five-lane facility with 90' of right-of-way and a center turn lane with a projected cost of \$23 million. Alternative B was a four-lane median divided facility with 100' of right-of-way at \$26 million. Both options would widen the existing facility and would include bike lanes and 5' sidewalk on both sides.

We received more than 200 comments from citizens with the majority favoring the four-lane median divided option. The primary reason given for choosing the median option was that it was "aesthetically pleasing" followed closely by being "safer." The following chart is a breakdown of the first public meeting survey results:



In order to widen the road it will be necessary to make improvements to the existing culvert that passes Horse Pen Creek under the roadway. After the first public meeting, we conducted a hydraulic study of this culvert and Horse Pen Creek, and mapped the existing streams and wetlands along the corridor. While adding a fifth barrel to the existing culvert appeared on a preliminary level to be the most cost effective solution for modifying this structure, it was not found to be the most beneficial solution when considering the long term. When it comes to key factors of consideration such as drainage, accommodation for the Bicentennial Trail, flexibility for future concerns regarding development and runoff, and environmental impact, the bridge option was determined to be the most viable.

Staff made revisions to the median alternative based on feedback from the first public meeting. A second public meeting was conducted September 22nd where we presented the four-lane median divided section as the recommended alternative for improvements to Horse Pen Creek Road. The final cost estimate for this option came in at \$28 million with the inclusion of the bridge over Horse Pen Creek. We will continue to receive public comment through the end of the week and then make final revisions to the recommended alternative.



Next Steps

The project planning study will be completed by the end of the year and the project will then be turned over to our Engineering and Inspections Department to conduct the survey, design and right-of-way acquisition process. The anticipated schedule for the completion of the project is listed below.

Tentative Schedule

- Complete Project Planning Study..... Winter 2009
- Complete Survey / Design Winter 2011
- Complete Right-of-Way Acquisition and Utility Relocation Summer 2014
- Complete Construction..... Summer 2017

Please feel free to contact me if you need any additional information. In the meantime, you may view the recommended alternative and materials from the public meetings on our website at <http://www.greensboro-nc.gov/horsepencreek/>.